

REMARKS

Claims 1, 7, 15, 18, 19 and 25 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Lewit. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to specify that the weight per unit area of the carbon fiber reinforcing material is 100 to 2000 g/m² and the weight per unit area of the non-woven fabric is 5 to 30 g/m². These limitations were previously recited in claims 6 and 11 respectively. Accordingly, no new matter has been added, nor has any new issue been raised since the Examiner has already considered these limitations.

As described in the specification on page 14, line 20, through page 15, line 6, the toughness of the complex fiber reinforcing material is improved when the weight per unit area of the non-woven fiber is within the claimed range and when the weight per unit area of the non-woven fiber is less than the weight per unit area of the carbon fiber reinforcing material.

As the Examiner stated in the last Office Action (see paragraph 9), Lewit fails to disclose the claimed weight per unit area of the carbon fiber reinforcing material. Further, neither Lewit nor any of the other references cited by the Examiner discloses that the toughness of the complex reinforcing material is improved when the weight per unit area of the non-woven fiber is less than the weight per unit area of the carbon fiber reinforcing material as claimed in claim 1. Since Lewit fails to disclose or suggest these claimed characteristics of the complex reinforcing material, claim 1 should be allowed. Claims 15, 18, 19 and 25, which depend from claim 1, should be allowed for at least the same reasons.

Claims 3, 8-11 and 22 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lewit in view of Yao. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 3 claims a complex fiber reinforcing material that contains 5 to 50 wt% of

low-melting point fibers and that has a carbon fiber reinforcing material that is integrated with a non-woven fabric by heat bonding. The Examiner acknowledges that Lewit fails to teach these claim limitations, but states that these limitations would have been obvious in view of Yao.

The international filing date of this application, and thus its U.S. filing date, is February 20, 2000. Yao was not filed until April 20, 2001. Accordingly, Yao is not prior art to this application. Since Lewit does not disclose all of the limitations claimed in claim 3, and since Yao is not prior art to this application, claim 3 should be allowed. Claims 8-11 and 22, which depend from claim 3, should be allowed for at least the same reasons.

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lewit in view of Davies. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 2 claims a complex fiber reinforcing material that has a non-woven fabric integrated with a fiber reinforcing material by using a pressure sensitive adhesive. The Examiner acknowledges that Lewit fails to teach the use of a pressure sensitive adhesive to integrate the non-woven and woven fabric layers, but states that use of this adhesive would have been obvious in view of Davies.

This application has a U.S. filing date of February 20, 2000. Davies has a filing date of December 11, 2001. Accordingly, Davies is not prior art to this application. Since, as explained above, Lewit alone does not disclose or make obvious the claimed invention claim 2 should be allowed.

Claims 4 and 5 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lewit. Claims 4 and 5 depend from claims 1-3, and are patentable over Lewit for at least the same reasons given above for claims 1-3.

Claims 6, 12, 13, 14, 16, 21 and 23 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lewit in view of Nishimura. Claim 24 has been rejected under 35

USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lewit in view of Seemann. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 12 has been cancelled. Claims 6, 13, 14, 16, 21, 23 and 24 depend from claims 1-3. As stated above, Lewit fails to disclose all of the features of claims 1-3. The Examiner relies upon Nishimura to allegedly disclose the weight per unit area of the carbon fiber reinforcing material. The Examiner relies upon Seemann only to disclose vacuum bagging for impregnating composite layers.

Claim 1 has been amended to specify both the weight per unit area of the carbon reinforcing material and the non-woven fabric. As discussed above, applicants disclose that when the weight per unit area of the non-woven fiber is less than the weight per unit area of the carbon fiber reinforcing material as claimed, the toughness of the complex fiber reinforcing material is improved.

Lewit, Nishimura and Seemann fail to disclose or suggest controlling both the weight per unit area of the carbon reinforcing material and the non-woven reinforcing material as claimed in claim 1. Further, Lewit, Nishimura and Seemann fail to disclose or suggest a complex fiber reinforcing material that has a non-woven fabric integrated with a fiber reinforcing material by using a pressure sensitive adhesive as claimed in claim 2. Finally, Lewit, Nishimura, and Seemann fail to disclose or suggest a complex fiber reinforcing material that contains 5 to 50 wt% of low-melting point fibers and a complex fiber reinforcing material in which carbon fiber reinforcing material is integrated with a non-woven fabric by heat bonding as claimed in claim 3. Claims 6, 13, 14, 16, 21, 23 and 24, which depend from claims 1-3, would not have been obvious in view of Lewit, Nishimura and Seemann for at least the reasons given for claims 1-3.

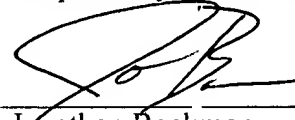
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Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. 368042006800.

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Respectfully submitted,

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